MOCKEL, Donald.

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Signature of narrator

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Name of narrator

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(dated) 9/3/81

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(dated) September 3, 1981

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Accepted for the Oakland Neighborhood History Project

by

(Project Director) (Dated)

Oakland Neighborhood History Project

Interview with Donald Mockel
Date of Interview: 3 September 1981, Oakland, California
Interviewers: Sally Thomas and Padraigin McCaffreddy
Transcriber: Sally Thomas

Begin Tape One, Side One

Notes and Partial Transcription

0-5 minutes/
0-50 counter

opens talking about his mother's brother — "Foghorn Murphy"
quite a character" — poor boy; went to school until 4th grade, was then able to get in with "big people"

Paul "Foghorn" Murphy

(this brother raised Donald and his 3 sisters — Foghorn's)

everyone in the railroad had a nick-name — Foghorn's brother was "Rags" Murphy

with death in the family (of father) the railroad gave a job to the oldest son to keep the family together

So Daniel Murphy went to work for the Southern Pacific when he was 14 years old for 50¢/day, about 10 hours each day.

"He had his overalls sewed so many times →

that it was rags, and my grandmother would sew them again, and he'd polish the engines. He'd have to get underneath to wipe up all the grease and that sort of thing. And everytime he'd come from underneath there he was rags, so they called him "Rags" Murphy."

Rags never married – but took care of the family, paid the bills.

custom of giving eldest son job with death of father – just understood, not written down. Water Company used to do it, too. Scavenge Company did too (with shares) Works that way with the fire department, too. (Amazing recounting of how many people in the family have worked in the fire department.) Says they were police or firemen.

mentions family "Brock" – married his mother's sister – from the German community at St. Elizabeth's

("Father Mac") priest at St. Patricks, 10th + Pendleton, Irish – visited congregation on his horse – found Catholic girls jobs – had an "in" with the Bell Telephone Company, he knew the president an Irishman, by the name of Flinn. 35

Donald's mother and aunt both got jobs at the phone company this way. Stayed in the company — became chief operator and supervisor. (This was around the 1900s) (Well, about 1915 or so)

5-10 minutes | 50-100 counter

His mother lived at the corner of 32nd and Adeline — she walked to work to save the nickel fare for the streetcar ride

World War I — her youngest brother was the only one who went, Gene — he later became a police officer — he was first working for the railroads, fixing clocks on the trains

When Gene got back from serving, he couldn't get his job back at the railroad (no work available) so he took the policeman's examination, passed and took that job.

Doesn't remember any real hardship — there was always food on the table.

Depression — then, if you worked for the fire department, family had to live next door or close by in order to hear the fire alarms. So, when Donald's mother got married she moved

to 8th and Willow Streets and lived right next door to the firehouse — his father was a stoker → got the boiler going to make steam for the fire

"In those days the young bride-to-be had her apartment or house all fixed so when she returned from the honeymoon — my mother worked and had it all fixed, and they went to San Jose and stayed in the St. Claire Hotel ~~When~~ when they came back, the firemen (had) got in the house and they hung everything out the window. She cried for two or three days. All the chairs were hanging on sheets, and they took pictures of them. (It was) just as a joke. My father was a jokester, too, I guess."

mentions his sister — Dorothy O'Connell — lives in San Francisco — she went to the same hotel in San Jose that the mother and father had gone too for the honeymoon.

Donald's father, as far as he knows, never had a car.

"Everybody was closely knitted — you just trusted everybody."

Donald got married when he was 30 years old.

Before then lived at 3317 Adeline. It was around the time to get married that people started locking doors.

People who lived on that block – secretary to the city council still lives on the same block, both she and her sister – Elsie and Albina Giannini, Italians.

Mentions Slavonians who worked for the railroad and lived in the neighborhood.

10-15 minutes | 100-155 counter

Southern Pacific was very powerful – had much control over the property. Thinks the head of the S.P. at one time was governor of California

The Santa Fe railroad used to go to Bakersfield, but then you had to take a bus into Los Angeles

Donald's uncle died in the S.P. hospital in San Francisco on Fell Street – retired from S.P. after working for 49 years – his pension was unbelievably low

Most people owned their homes – his grandmother – Mary Murphy (she married a Murphy, too) – lived at Adeline and 32nd

She was a Tipperarian — the husband was from Corke — used to say Corkes were mean

Donald's house a meeting place for the priest

the church at 36th and Adeline moved to 19th and Market — is now a Baptist church — was cut in 4 sections for the move — used to be St. Andrew's Catholic Church — the state bought it for the freeway — originally built in 1908, moved in early 1960s.

Donald went to St. Andrew's, and was married there. His sisters were married there too.

(Donald had one brother and 3 sisters.)

His mother had one sister and 3 brothers.

There were Portuguese in the neighborhood, too.

New Fire Chief of Oakland, Sam Goldman, was in the 1st grade with Donald (Sam is black) — Donald has a picture of the 1st grade class

[Clawson School]

There were some blacks.

Donald graduated from Herbert Hoover Junior High — of about a 200 graduating class, there were about 35 blacks — good relations.

"We used to call Sam "Little Black Sambo", and there was no resentment. Everybody went by nicknames."

15-20 minutes | 155-215 counter

In the fire department there was a black engine company, which happened to be behind Donald's house on Adeline. Now it's a church, but it was a 22 engine company

There was a period of about 17 years when no blacks were hired in the fire department.

Jimmy Stanislas (now sings with Kirk Murphy's band) — was first black hired after that period.

Donald's uncle was the one who worked to get blacks hired (this was probably in the 30s)

Jimmy was a prizefighter

Long (but unclear) explanation of this period — he seems to be saying that no one was hired during that period

"There was a period there that you couldn't buy a job in the fire department in Oakland."

But his stepfather did get in somehow because he was close to the age limit of 30 years old.
(Stepfather's name was Patterson)

Schooling — "Rags" went until the 4th grade
"Foghorn" " " " " "

Donald didn't go to college, though he had the opportunity — his mother wanted him to go. Neither did his brother or sisters — high school education meant more.

Donald mentions the Giarni sisters who got very good jobs — very competitive positions.

Donald's sister got a state job as a secretary for a woman in the State Health Department. Civil service jobs were secure.

Donald's children did go to college — his son from Oregon Tech, hired first by Xerox, then got into computers — still single

"He's got a home he's buying in Pleasanton, he's single, he's got 3 cars — he's got the world."

other son — first 8 years in St. Leo's Catholic School, then went to Piedmont High School

Donald's wife is secretary to the principal of adult education at Piedmont High.

His son taught a class once a week in computer programming for a while in this adult education program.

Donald's wife is from Irish background, too. Her name was Concave (?) — from New York — from a "broken family"

20-25 minutes | 215-275 counter

She belonged to a sewing club that Donald's mother belonged to — that's how Donald met her.

"My mother, when she died, her wish was that she'd never die anyplace but her own home. We did break it in the last few hours, and she died in Kaiser Hospital."

She died 7 years ago, so she stayed in West Oakland until then.
They all stayed in West Oakland until they got married.

His sister moved to S.F. when she got married because the husband was teaching there.

His brother married a woman who lived at 18th & 19th on Chestnut Street — her father was a scavenger — they moved to 32nd and Adeline — they lived upstairs over a store — he son is a priest now in Oakland in the bishop's office

2nd sister Phyllis died of leukemia, she was married to a merchant marine man- he and Donald went into the Oakland Fire Department the same day.

"We studied in our basement on Adeline Street and we become members of Oakland Fire Department on April 1, 1949."

They lived at Adeline because she had leukemia.

Friends didn't move away from the neighborhood until they married.

Mother didn't complain about the neighborhood changing — she was religious, kept her problems to herself

Lionel Wilson — Donald knew him when he was 3 years old, from Louisiana — lived a block away. Lionel had a twin sister and a brother, Warren — his parents went to church regularly, daily — went to St. Andrew's Church, too

Lionel wanted to be known as a Creole from Louisiana

Says there was no discrimination.

Donald born in 1921 on Adeline. He worked in the shipyards during WW II.

His father's brother, a Mockel, was a superintendent of Moore's Shipyards machine shop — hired Don's cousin, Henry Mockel and Don's brother — pay was $12.50/week, 6 days/week.

They served 4 years as apprentice machinists.

25-30 minutes | 275-340 counter

started out working in the tool room, handing out tools

they were "top flight machinists" in the Bay Area

Donald's brother worked for 2 companies, for Moore's Shipyards for about 20 years, then Mill Engineering Company

Donald worked for Belling (?) Furniture Store when he got out of school, then got his uncle to hire him as at ~~machinist~~ Moore's Shipyards, but not as a machinist — got into shipfitting, instead.

When the war broke out he worked 7 days/week until he was drafted into the army

"In those days, when the war come, you'd walk by the gate, and they'd pull you in to go to work."

Problems with the Okies and Arkies — used to be able to tell them by the hats they wore — but now they've worked themselves into the mainstream, some even working in the fire department (Capt. Mills)

Jim Crow attitudes carried in with the Okies and Arkies — they felt hostile towards the equality of job opportunities given to the blacks, but the feeling "simmered down" -90

Swimming in the bay — no swimming in Lake Merritt — and no swimming pools at the schools until late years.
Mentions the "Lakeside Plunge"

Could tell the Arkies and Okies by their complexion — reddish, and thick accents
"just practically like an Irishman, when you can cut it with a knife"

Donald lived for a while in a a apartment on Madison.

30-35 minutes | 340-410 Counter

Henry Murphy lived at 16th and Market — had a two-story place and made a lot of money by renting rooms out at 8 hour shifts for the shipyard workers — he got about $10.00 from each boarder per week.

lots of people left their jobs to work at the shipyard because the pay was so good.

Fire department shifts — would work for 24 hours, then went home for 48 hours — often would work in the shipyards during the 48 hour break as firemen (like his Uncle)

Donald worked as dock seamen at the army base, too, unloading cars

on the weekends worked at a cannery in Emeryville (this was before he was drafted)

There was no unemployment at that time — unless you were lazy

Donald's aunt (wife of Foghorn Murphy), living in Los Angeles, went to work in defense — his uncle was mad when she went to work — she had a Japanese maid at the time, but went to work anyway — and she was proud of it!

addresses women workers issue — opposes women working in fire dept. — they don't provide 100% of man's performance

35-40 minutes | 410-500 Counter

workers at shipyards paid by walking through gate – a certain x amount paid by Uncle Sam

riveting is slow process – but builds a better ship
welding was quick process

women's issues discussed more

Donald's mother never worked outside the home – his family lived at 3317 Adeline, his grandmother at 3202 Adeline – Donald's mother took care of her mother when she had a stroke

a "hoghead" is an engineer in the railroad — in the railroad seniority was the number one consideration in giving someone a job (promotion)

St. Patrick's Church had "call men"

"This Saint Patrick's Church used to have what they called "call men". When there was mass on Sunday they'd have a call boy, and he'd go to the church, and these engineers and brakemen and switchmen and firemen for the railroad would be in church and the call man would ~~be in the~~ walk down just like he was an

→

usher making up a crew. "Hey Mac, we need you, we need you." They'd have to go, and they'd have their bucket or whatever was with them, and they'd go down to the railroad."

Henry Foste — a dispatcher — his mother had "Foster's Rooms" a rooming house on 7th and Pike near the railroad yards. She was popular because she cooked and fixed rooms up for railroad staff.

Picnic in Santa Cruz Mountains every year. Donald's mother made some of the kids go along with his uncle because he had da drinking problem.

When they came back the adults were all plastered, and the kids would drag their uncle home.

Mentions that for each block, about 3 or 4 people made wine — mostly Italian, but Portuguese did it too.

Winecars came in on Santa Fe railroad at 40th and San Pablo — kids would reach into the cars and grab the grapes, eating them on the way home.

Limit was 200 gallons — legally couldn't make more than that.

Martin O'Toole / with Hallcott Company (?) made beer — Donald bottled it — he made a keg of it

40-45 minute | 500+ 5-90 counter

Martin was a fireman, too. He lived across the street from Donald.

Explains how they bottled it — with sugar, rubber hose & funnel

Donald's oldest daughter to marry day after tomorrow (September 5, 1981), graduated from UC Santa Barbara, major in art history — her fiancé is Presbyterian, but they're to be married by Donald's nephew at St. Joseph's Church in Berkeley, Father Mockel — entire family to come up.

Closely knit family.

But in the Mockel family, since his mother has been dead, family has fallen apart somewhat — Donald's trying to keep it going. He has 3 sons, and 3 daughters.

Sunday evening dinners are for family — not forced, but open for them if they want to come.

Parents have to keep the family together.

"I tell my wife, "If we can't see them once-a-week, well, we might as well hang up." "

But families are falling away

Says he ran into "Cookie" Lavagetto, an Italian raised in Temescal, an ex-fireman and ex-big league baseball player — Lavagetto mentioned to Donald that he rarely sees his brother (is this Ed Lavagetto?)

Donald's mother — liked to tease people, a practical joker — she was born at 4th and Pine, her parents from Ireland in the 1800s — first in San Francisco, then here

his grandmother was one to invite everyone in for a cup of tea — including the mailman, Mr. Stone — she gave him a necktie every Christmas

bill collectors came around at that time, So she always invited them in

His (maternal) grandfather a railroad man — was killed in a rail accident, and that's how "Rags" Murphy got his job. No pensions then.

45-47 minutes | 540-640 counter

Donald's father died in the fire department without a pension, too.

"Crystal sets" for fun

Tuned into Oakland Baseball games — scores reported on outside billboard of Cigar Store

The Oakland Baseball games were played in Emeryville because at that time there was no ball park in Oakland... — Ballplayers (visiting) stayed at the California Hotel, a block away from St. Andrew's Church — pastor at that time was Father Fleming from Santa Clara who had turned down a big-time baseball career (to become a priest?)

Begin Side Two

0-5 minutes	0-50 counte

Shined shoes up and down San Pablo — competition for regular shoe-shines

on weekends he sold peanuts at the ballpark and pick up cushions in order to get a free ticket — he'd sell the ticket to an adult, then would sneak in through the firehouse

didn't go to S.F. very often — as a boy sometimes he went with his uncle from the ferry building they'd walk all the way to Fisherman's Wharf, buy a package of shrimps, then walk across the Golden Gate Bridge, return, then go to Luca Restaurant who served a special rate dinner downstairs

His uncle liked to do so much walking because he wanted to lose weight, but then they'd eat a lot at dinner so it didn't make much difference

Brought 5 crabs (sold for a dollar) home and waiting for the ferry at —

the ferry building, movies (animated cartoons) were shown inside the ferry building for those waiting.

Donald remembers that a bakery was nearby — scent was wonderful going through the building. (He was) 10 or 11 years old at the time.)

Doesn't remember labor unrest at that time.

Remembers the general strike that tied up everything — at Kahn's in the '30s! — was about 50 days long.

Story about a cousin in the unions — conflict between son & father (a non-union man)

thinks the governor even sent some troops in.

mother didn't discuss politics — women didn't in those days.

5-10 minutes | 50-100 counter

In those days the supervisor had power over the welfare department in his district — Supervisor Wickson lived on Holler Street (?) had a gymnasium where Jack Dempsey and other fighters trained — Dempsey

carnival, circus parade

One of Donald's best friends while he was growing up lived 3 doors down, married Donald's sister — his father had an electrical business, lost it, and ended up in WPA, late moved up to Grass Valley — he became mayor of Grass Valley. of Norwegian descent. Bob Thorsen.

10-15 minutes | 100-755 counter

"Pipe City" during Depression — cement pipes — 54th & San Leandro Blvd.

An Italian friend too.
Donald was student body president at Technical High School — the largest high school in Oakland. He was the first non-Italian to be elected student body president in 17 years. (That was the Temescal area)

E. Oakland and 34th Avenue — German Population.
23rd Avenue was Portuguese, called "Jingle Town" — worked in cotton mill and Del Monte & Buell (?) Canneries

mentions first blacks were v.r. porters
Says they tried Filipinos first, but the Filipinos weren't tall enough to reach up and make the bunk beds.

Mr. Hippolyte – a block baker for the railroad. Went to Saint Andrews, too. His two sons worked for the railroad, too. Mr. Hippolyte still living.

Most of the Irish were in West Oakland

Edwin Meese's father was Alameda County tax collector for many years.

Edwin Meese from 8th and Union Streets. (Donald thinks – not sure.)
Edwin Meese's father still alive – Irish descent, still in Oakland

Judge Kennedy – Hanna Street
Judge Jim Quinn – 80th and Adeline

Jim Quinn's son is an attorney now in Oakland – was judge for a while ~~out~~ in Emeryville until that position became defunct. – self-appointed positions (hand-picked – many Irish)

15-20 minutes | 155-215 counter

No people from Donald's mother's generation left.

Remembers his mother telling stories about the earthquake and fire.

Donald has a sugar bowl and pitcher from remains of fire - opened to public.. embers came over from San Francisco from the fire.

Los Angeles sent trainloads of food and clothing up, after the earthquake.

Bay Bridge built in 1939

"The only present you were sure to get for Christmas was a wagon because your mother, on Saturday, would have you go with her up to the Piggly Wiggly and bring home the groceries. For $5.00 the wagon was full."

Used firewood - did not burn coal.

Remembers going across the Bay Bridge before it was open to the public - went with his uncle from the railroad who had some special permit.

But the Bay Bridge didn't influence Donald to go to San Francisco more often.

Went to the World Fair Exposition in S.F. 1939-40, Treasure Island

20-25 minutes | 215-275 count

Coca Cola had a plant you could tour on Treasure Island.

On Treasure Island they wanted to widen one of the streets and line it with palm trees so many people were asked to give up (sell) their trees. His grandmother had one.

Calvacade — Pat Patterson.

His mother went to St. Patrick's Church. Donald's father bought the house [illegible] on Adeline from his parents

Grandmother's house cost $500.00 — payments were $8.00/month — Donald has the contract lying around his house somewhere.

At St. Andrews — the Irish:
Father Fleming
Father McMenais (?)
Father O'Brien
Father Ryan
Father Hayes
Father Farrell

Father Silva — Portugnese

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Father Silva — "He could do with the Portuguese people what no Irishman could do."

Whist games — Uncle Pags ran the whist games

Donald's mother was in charge of getting the prizes for the whist games

Father Silva got ~~pigs~~ rabbits, chickens, etc. from the Portuguese as prizes

The Holy Ghost celebration — the shamarita dance Pentecost Sunday

25-30 minutes | 275-340 Counter

explains this celebration meat laid out — Blessed by the fathers on Friday night

Donald's mother always had him go with the priest as an alter boy to the blessing because the priest was given meat, and the altar boy, too.

Saturday night was the parade (for the Holy Ghost celebration) fireworks display at 34th and Peralta shamarita dance afterwards

Sunday was the mass and then another parade — that night a dinner was given for the poor — but everybody showed up

8th & Chestnut — St. Joseph's — was the Portuguese church — now combined with St. Andrews

Watts Track — name of a man, the streets are named after his family members: Helen, Hanna, Louise, Eddie

San Francisco had the real St. Patrick's celebrations

Jim Quinn
Gene Stackle } → two political factions

Mike Kelley, the political boss

30-35 minutes | 340-410 counter

in 1939 he was political boss of Alameda County, a Republican, bigger, more powerful than the Knowlands of the Tribune.
He had the Post Enquirer at that time, a Hearst newspaper, 6 days a week, no Sunday edition

Mike Kelly was the forme' superintendent of the mint in San Francisco, appointed by the president

Kelly did a lot of favors

"Headhunter" organizations

Jack Hustler, (?) city manager
Earl Warren made him (Kelly?) city manager twice.

Kelly - never elected
wore an old stiff collar, never got married, had two sisters
died - left over 1/4 million dollars

Donald used to clean Kelly's spit patoon in his office - missed so often that he burned a whole in the belly store

"political boss" - died when J.R. Knowland died

Democratic town
Cross filing - no matter what party you belonged to, could vote for anyone - that's how Earl Warren was always elected

Harry Bartel - in with Kelly
Samuels

35-40 minutes | 410-500 counter

Kelly had power

never had a police chief who was Catholic — Catholics never got to the top

Ku Klux Klan — used to meet at the Danish Hall — uncle covered some of the incidents, wore a hood, went to the gatherings, tried to recognize voices

"Moral Squad" — during the Depression (now known as the Vice Squad)

IWW's used to meet at the park in Jefferson Square

thick frame: "I Won't Work" — woman in charge of it

Brock, his uncle, used to go in and "clean 'em out"

↳ they lived at 11th Avenue, in East Oakland between E. 15th & Foothill Blvd.

— Donald used to stay with them over the weekends to give his mother a break, also spent 11 weeks during the summers with them

Smiths known as "Moneyback Smith's" because they gave out green stamps

at school had a bank book — to teach them how to save "Farmers Bank" — became American Trust — now Wells Fargo (used to be across from the Tribune Tower)

in 1948 Donald ran for Alameda County Supervisor
" Wickson — incumbent
Claude Allen (black) - came in second
Donald came in third

40-45 minutes | 500-590 counter

Wickson told Donald later that he was glad Claude Allen won 2nd to be in the runoff because then he was sure to win — would have been harder to run against Donald

Rosetto
Governor Goodman Knight
Emanuelle Rosetto — ran against Donald for Supervisor position (?)
(good friends

45-47 minutes | 590-640 counter

ties
wants streets to be safe
84-85 murders in Oakland

about crime: "I'm telling you that I know people. I can take you for the next hour and go through West Oakland and there's not a block that somebody won't →

either holler out to me or call me over or something. I know the people. It's going to be 33 years April 1st that I've been in this department. There's nobody who knows more black people than me. . . . I say take the policemen out of the car and double the police department, and make them know people."

End of Interview.